

LANGUAGE ARTS: SOCIAL NETWORKING, BLOGGING AND WIKI PROJECTS

September 7, 2010

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This year in Language Arts we will be participating in some exciting writing opportunities. Our class will be writing in two online formats using Internet interfaces known as blogs and wikis. A blog is an interactive type of writing. A student will write a post that is short and concise. Readers are able to respond and comment on the initial written post. The writing remains interactive and contributors are able to correspond back and forth using the blog site. Research shows that blogging improves student writing skills due to increased motivation to write. Wikis are collaborative websites (like Wikipedia) where students can contribute ideas and make changes to information, post discussion items and respond to others.

Since the blog and wiki writing will be on the internet, student identities will be protected. Only student participants and the teacher will be able to add posts or comments. Both the blog and wiki will be password controlled and monitored frequently by the teacher.

The following personal safety rules will be maintained throughout the blogging project:

- Never reveal information about your personal identity online (ie. name, address, phone number, age, physical description or school).
- Never reveal personal information online about someone else.
- Never reveal your access password or that of anyone else.

In order to set up the accounts, it is necessary to have an email address. Students will be invited to be a member of our online community through the email address provided. They will be given a personal password and login. Once students have received this information, they should print a copy and bring it to school where I will keep a record of all the logins. Instructions will be reviewed in class.

At the beginning, students will be invited to participate as “contributors”. This means that all of their entries must be approved by the teacher before being posted to the blog or wiki. This will add another level of security and ensure that guidelines are followed. Students will be able to read and comment on each other’s entries after teacher approval. Blog and wiki posts and responses will be evaluated as part of the reading mark in language and some class time will be provided.

Please provide an email address below so that I can start the invitation process. The email can be a family, parent or student email address. However, since we will be using a number of Web 2.0 applications in class this year, a google account is recommended. Students can register for a free “gmail” account through Google if they do not have one already. Please visit <http://www.google.ca> to register. I will demonstrate the process at school so that all students know what to do.

I will also be inviting students to be part of a Facebook class network for instructional purposes. Recently, the WRDSB has unblocked this social networking site for students 13 years of age or older. This will be a learning opportunity for all involved and we will investigate appropriate and safe uses for this popular site. Please review the **Digital Code of Conduct** and **Character Development** handouts in the first-day package and post in a prominent place at home.

The deadline for submission of email addresses is **Monday, September 13th, 2010.**

Thank you,
Mme Giannopoulos.

LANGUAGE ARTS: SOCIAL NETWORKING, BLOGGING AND WIKI PROJECTS

(Please return to Mme Giannopoulos by Mon., September 13th, 2010.)

I have read and understood the information about social networking, blogging and wikis.

_____ has my permission to participate in:

(Student's Name)

- the blogging and wiki projects
- other web 2.0 applications through a google account
- our class Facebook group.

Please feel free to contact me at school if you have any further questions about these new initiatives.

Email Address: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____